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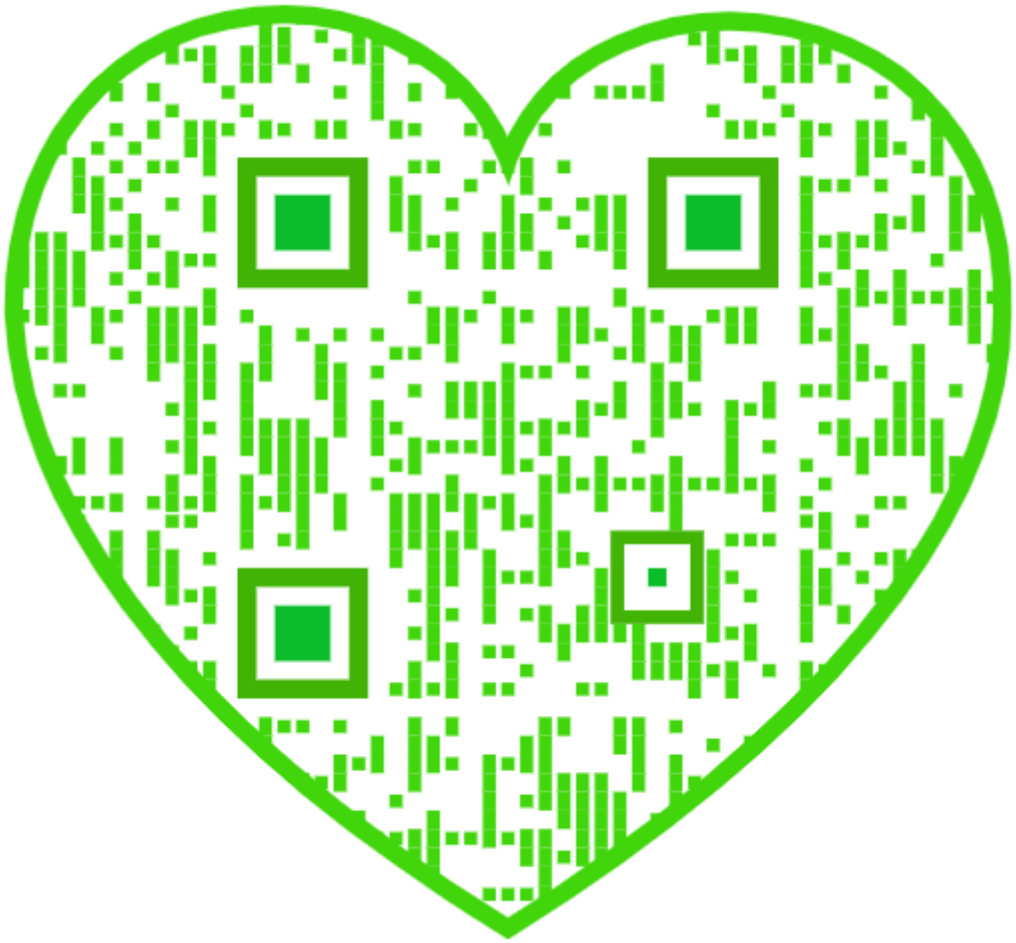

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SEVENTH EDITION

BITS

AND

BEARING REINS

AND

HORSES

AND

HARNESS.

BY

EDWARD FORDHAM FLOWER.

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PRICE SIXPENCE.

Illustrated with a Portrait of MACADAM.

THE STONES OF LONDON;

OR,

MACADAM *VERSUS* VESTRIES.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "BITS AND BEARING-REINS."

"On behalf of the ratepayers of the metropolis, Mr. Flower denounces a continuance of the present system, and invokes the pressure of public opinion on local authorities to return to the common-sense plan of Macadam."—*Morning Post.*

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BITS AND BEARING-REINS;

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON

HORSES AND HARNESS.

BY

EDWARD FORDHAM FLOWER.

Seventh Edition.

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LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK & MELBOURNE.

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SF309
F55
1885

PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

ALTHOUGH it may be true that "the evil that men do lives after them," it happily is not *always* the case that "the good is oft interred with their bones." The work to which Mr. Flower devoted his later years still lives and grows, and throughout the land men are gradually learning to see and to condemn the unnecessary torture to which fashion has subjected the noblest and most useful of animals; this is evidenced by the continued demand for "Bits and Bearing-reins," which has now exhausted the sixth edition.

Mr. Flower's sons have decided to republish the work without any alteration or addition, but thinking that readers may care to know something of the man as well as of his work, the following brief sketch of his life is appended.

EDWARD FORDHAM FLOWER was born on the 31st of January, 1805, being the younger son of Mr. Richard Flower, of Marden Hill, near Hertford, a

M370255

brewer, banker, and well-known agriculturist of his day, who, among other public services, took an active part in an attempt (not ultimately successful) to introduce merino sheep into England, with a view to improve the character of the wool grown in this country. His mother was Elizabeth Fordham, of an old Hertfordshire family of that name. One of his uncles was Mr. Benjamin Flower, a political writer and newspaper editor of some celebrity, who, when "advanced" views were less popular than they are at the present day, suffered more than once for the too free expression of his opinions by imprisonment in Newgate. This uncle was the father of the talented and accomplished sisters, Sarah and Eliza Flower, the former of whom composed the words, and the latter the music, of the hymn "Nearer, my God, to Thee," now found in every collection of sacred poetry.

When the subject of our notice was a boy of thirteen, his father, actuated chiefly by political motives, sold his estate in Hertfordshire and all his possessions in this country, and emigrated with his whole family to America, founding the settlement of Albion in what was then the "backwoods"

of Illinois. In the conflicts which soon afterwards took place between the advocates of negro slavery and of freedom, he threw all his influence on the latter side, and had a considerable share in preventing Illinois from finally becoming a slave-holding state. At the age of twenty Edward Flower returned to England, and a few years afterwards married Celina, the eldest daughter of Mr. John Greaves, of Radford House, near Leamington, who, after nearly fifty-six years of married life, survived him only a few months. Selecting Stratford-on-Avon as his future residence, he commenced to build the brewery, which has now become, under the management of his sons, so important an element in the commercial prosperity of the town.

During the early part of his residence at Stratford, Mr. Flower lived near the brewery, the rapid development of which was due to his extreme assiduity and perseverance; but in 1855 he built the pleasantly-situated house, a short distance from the town, known as "The Hill," now the home of his youngest son. Here all cultivated visitors to Shakespeare's birthplace, especially those from the other side of the Atlantic, were sure to

meet with a hearty and hospitable welcome. Mr. Flower took an active part in all the affairs of the borough (of which he was four times chosen mayor) and of the county, of which he was a magistrate; and the energy he threw into the organisation and promotion of the tercentenary celebration of Shakespeare's birth, in 1864, of the managing committee of which he was chairman, will be fresh in the memory of many. At the outbreak of the war of secession in the United States, he at once saw that it was a struggle between the causes of slavery and freedom, and he wrote, spoke, and lectured in advocacy of the course taken by the Northern States.

Being a very ready speaker, and inheriting very strongly the political convictions of his family, he was at one time desirous of Parliamentary distinction, and at the election of July, 1865, at only two days' notice, he stood for the borough of Coventry, losing the election by only a few votes. In 1868, when it was thought that the Reform Bill just passed might have altered the balance of the parties in the counties, it was determined to contest the hitherto firmly-held Conservative seats

of North Warwickshire, and Mr. Flower was selected, in conjunction with Mr. G. F. Muntz, as the Liberal candidate, with the result, however, of the return of the old members. Shortly after this a severe illness caused Mr. Flower to renounce public life for many years; and in 1873 he removed his residence to London, though continuing to the end to take the greatest interest in all that concerned the town of Stratford, and rarely missing attendance at the quarter sessions at Warwick, whenever his health permitted him to be present.

As it was quite inconsistent with his energetic nature to be idle, he henceforth devoted himself to an earnest endeavour to mitigate the sufferings to which horses are exposed by improper harness, especially tight bearing-reins and severe bits. Mr. Flower from his childhood had always a passion for horses, having seldom passed a day of his life without riding or driving, and had a great love for the animals which were to him such a source of enjoyment. Hence he could not bear to see them ill-treated through the ignorance or carelessness of their employers. He wrote, published, and largely circulated, at his own expense, pamphlets upon

"Horses and Harness," and "Bits and Bearing-reins," and either wrote himself or caused others to write, innumerable letters and articles in various journals calling attention to the subject. He gave lectures upon it in various parts of the country, and never lost an opportunity of denouncing, exhorting, and entreating all those who, generally, solely for fashion's sake, were offenders against the laws of humanity. He also took up the question of road-making, showing in a pamphlet, called "The Stones of London," how the admirable methods of Macadam have been completely departed from by his professed followers of the present day.

In Rotten Row, where he daily took his favourite exercise, his noble, erect figure, finely-cut features, and flowing white beard and hair, were familiar to all, and will be much missed by a large circle of friends, to whom his warmth of heart and openness and generosity of disposition had through life been strong sources of attachment. He died at his residence, 35, Hyde Park Gardens, on the 20th of March, 1883, and leaves three sons—(1) Charles Edward, of Avonbank, and Glencassley:

Sutherlandshire; (2) William Henry, F.R.S. and LL.D., Director of the Natural History Department of the British Museum, and President of the Zoological Society of London; and (3) Edgar, of The Hill, Stratford-on-Avon, and Middle Hill, near Broadway.

November, 1885.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

As my name has lately been associated with efforts to abolish the barbarous custom of driving carriage-horses with Gag bearing-reins, sharp Curbs, and atrocious Bits, to show that I do not speak without knowledge and experience, I will sketch a few facts in my past life bearing on the subject of horses. I do not remember the time when I could not ride. At four years of age I used to accompany a servant to our post-town, three miles from my father's residence, for letters, and before I was five went alone every morning on my pony for them.

My father was an excellent rider, and hunted with Lord Salisbury's hounds at that time. I used to go out frequently with him. I and my little pony (Moses) were well known to the then Dowager Lady Salisbury, whom I used to follow as well as I could, by scrambling up and down the banks, and along the Hertfordshire lanes. I

well remember being sent, at ten years of age, alone, a distance of forty miles to carry a letter, and bring back the answer the next day, that being a quicker way of sending it across the country than by post. That ride was done on a donkey, a fine Spanish ass, which my father imported with a large flock of merino sheep. In my eleventh year I went, on that same donkey, from our residence near Hertford to Guildford, in Surrey, on a similar errand; indeed, at that time riding and driving formed a large item in my scheme of education, much to my satisfaction.

Then the scene changed; but the ruling passion was still the same. We were in America, bound for what was then the "Far West." The road over the Alleghany Mountains for long distances was a mere track, or worse. I was then just thirteen, and I drove a pair of horses in an American carriage all the way, three hundred miles, from Philadelphia to Pittsburg. My mother, who was lame, did not like to trust the driving to any one but me. Had I used bearing-reins, curbs, &c., we should have come to grief.

Then we floated down the Ohio (in arks) before there were any steamboats on its waters; and another long and difficult driving journey brought

us to our destination. During the next few years I took many long journeys with my horse and dogs, sometimes lying out all night under a tree and lighting a fire to scare the wolves, when I would make a pillow of the saddle, and lie close to my horse's back for warmth. In that way we became friends, and I can never look upon horses but with feelings of sympathy, knowing how well they appreciate it, and how they suffer when neglected or unkindly treated. But I must get on with my story, though it is tempting to linger over some of those wild journeys of my youth.

Another change, and I returned to England, but was never without a horse. When I could not afford to give high prices, there was one fault I could always put up with, and that was what is called "temper." If a horse had a character for being vicious, that was the horse for me. I knew that probably by judicious management and kindness I could make him tractable, so I frequently got a capital animal at a very low price, and I have done as much riding and driving about the country as any one, with no bearing-reins, and generally with a plain snaffle bridle.

A few years ago I bought a fine horse with a

bad character—he was a roarer, a jibber, a bolter, and the late coachman told me I should never be able to drive him; but I liked his looks, and the result confirmed my good opinion. The roaring soon ceased after the tight gag bearing-rein was taken away; an easy bit was put in his mouth instead of the severe one, which had caused him to be restive through sheer pain; he became perfectly tractable, and I have driven him for years both in double and single harness with great comfort and safety.

I have for many seasons been well known in various hunting-fields in the Midland counties, but in consequence of a severe illness I have lately been obliged to give up hunting; and last year I came to live in London, thinking that the Row and the Park would in future be field enough for me; and so it would, and a very enjoyable one, were it not disfigured and disgraced by the barbarous and senseless use of spurs, whips, curbs, gag-bits, and bearing-reins. Fashion is strong—stronger, I fear, than humanity—but still I have hopes. Fashion no longer orders horses to be cropped, docked, and nicked; therefore these new forms of distortion and cruelty may give way.

If a few leaders of fashion would join with men and women of common sense and lovers of

humanity, we would soon wipe out this blot upon our civilisation. I am happy to have been allowed to raise my feeble voice in the cause: and I heartily thank all those (and they are many) who have come forward to help and encourage me. I shall persevere, and though I am old, I do not despair of living long enough to have it engraved on my tombstone,* "He was one of those men who caused the bearing-rein to be abolished."

E. F. FLOWER.

35, *Hyde Park Gardens.*

* See Sir Arthur Helps' "Some Talk about Animals and their Masters," p. 68.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT BEARING-REINS.

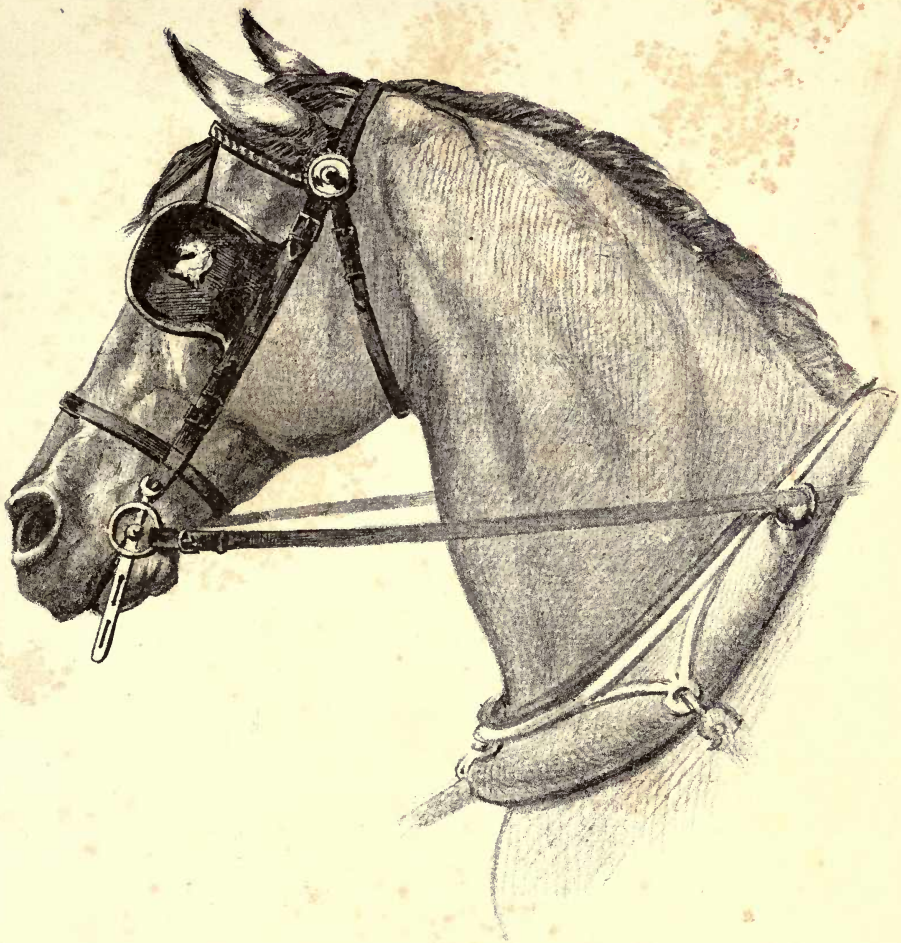
The evils of Bearing-reins, of which the sole use is to hold the horse's head at an unnatural and dangerous height, have been so frequently and so conclusively pointed out, that it might have been hoped they would have become as obsolete as cropping, docking, and nicking.

So far from this being the case, the evil has been continued in an aggravated form by the introduction of the "Gag bearing-rein."

The mouth of the horse is extremely sensitive. The most valuable qualification for a horseman is that he should possess what is termed "Hands." The rarity of this qualification arises from the fact that the hand of man is naturally far less sensitive than the mouth of the horse. Hence ladies have generally better hands than gentlemen, and gentlemen better hands than grooms.

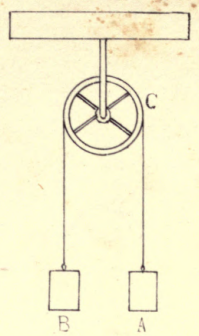
A horse in harness, without a bearing-rein, has the free command of his limbs, under the direction and control of his driver, communicated

Plate I.



COMFORT.

Fig 1.



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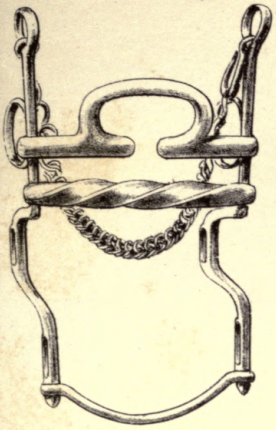

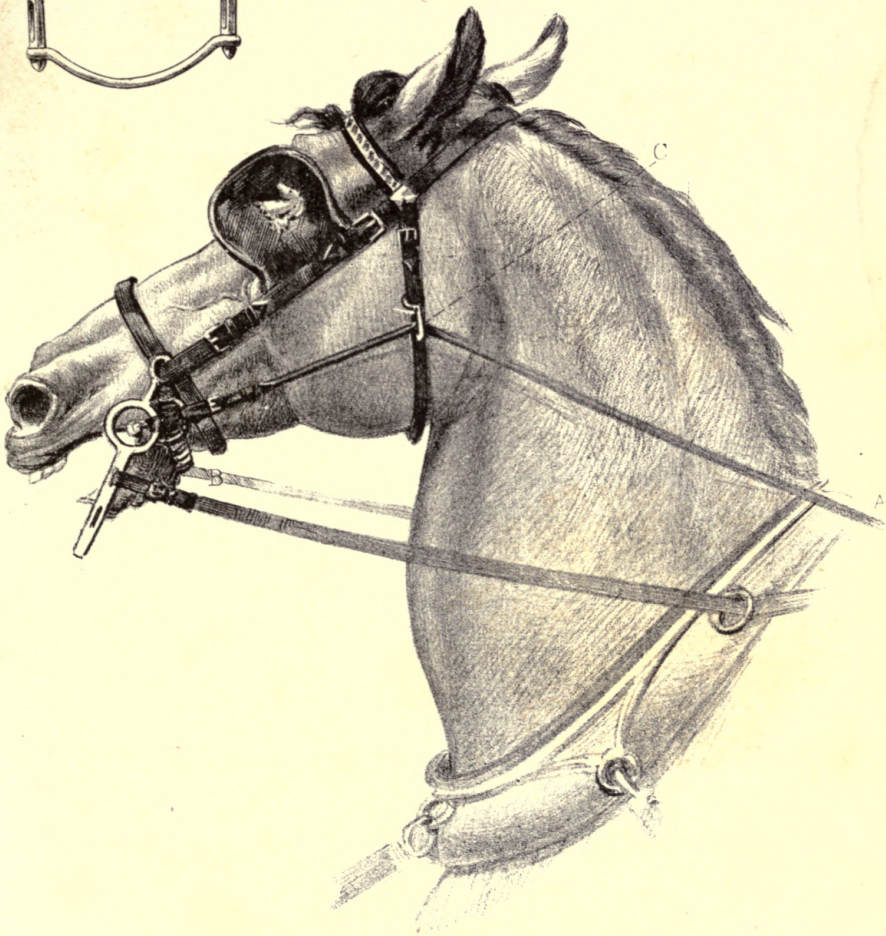

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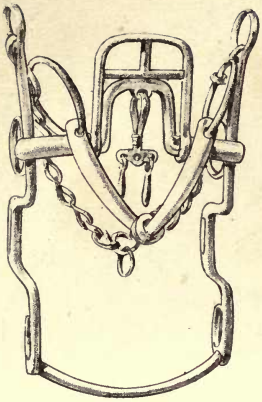
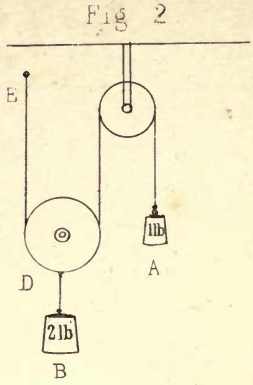
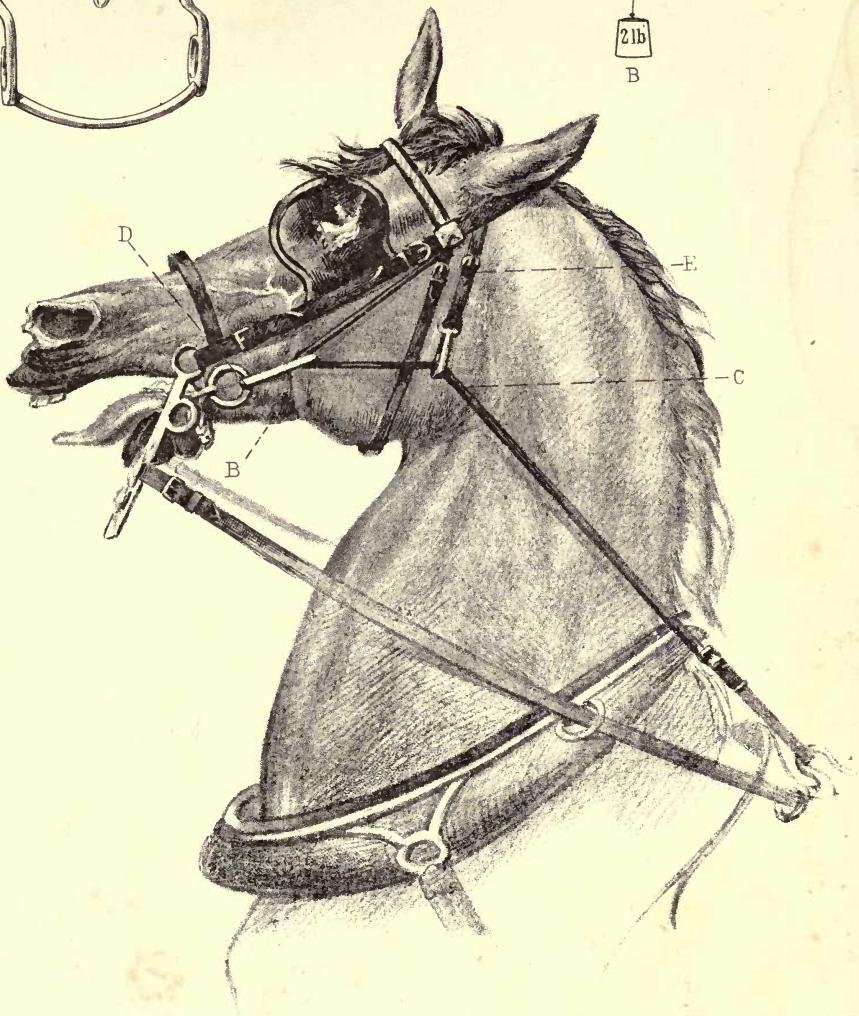


Plate 3.

Fig 2





TORTURE.

to him by the ordinary bit. If the driver has good hands the horse yields a prompt and ready obedience, and the most perfect sympathy exists between him and his master. A slip or a stumble is not likely to occur, and should it happen, recovery is easy.

The first step in the wrong direction is the use of the old-fashioned or simple bearing-rein (Pl. 2).

In this the bearing-rein is attached to the ring of the driving-bit at B; it passes through a loop attached to the bridle at C, and is fastened to a hook on the pad at A. The pad is prevented from moving forward by the crupper. Thus the head and tail of the horse are tied together, more or less tightly, according as the bearing-rein and crupper are respectively buckled.

This bearing-rein acts as a single or fixed pulley (Pl. 2, fig. 1), in which A, the power, is equivalent to B, the weight. A is the groom's hand or the power, B the horse's mouth or the weight, and C the pulley.

This bearing-rein may at any time be unhooked from the pad, and the horse thus released from its pressure; a great relief when kept standing for hours, and especially when going up hill.

Latterly a far more complicated and powerful instrument has come into fashion.

This is the Bedouin, or Gag bearing-rein (Pl. 3), which is attached to the top of the bridle (at E). It is then passed through a swivel attached to the separate bearing-rein bit, which has nothing to do with the driving. Thence it passes through the drop-ring (C), and is attached to the pad and crupper as in the former case.

The effect of this is to double the power by which it can be tightened, for by mechanics we learn that 1 lb. applied at A is equivalent to 2 lbs. at B, a fact which every one can prove for himself.

Thus it is evident what force is brought to bear on the horse's mouth, a sufficiently sensitive organ, even when unencumbered by another heavy bit, with cruel cutting power.

Severe as is the simple bearing-rein explained in Pl. 2, its evil is doubled by the gag system, for its elevating power is, as we have shown, doubled, nor can the coachman relax this terrible and dangerous gag-bit, for separate as it is from the driving apparatus, it would fall out of the horse's mouth, and to put it in again would take time and persuasion, or rather force.

The pain thus occasioned to the horse is intense.

The action of every muscle is impeded. If a false step is taken, recovery is rendered difficult. Discomfort makes the poor animal restless. The impatient movements occasioned by his distress are not unfrequently visited by a cut from the whip of an ignorant coachman; the horse is called unruly and ill-tempered, when he is only miserable. Some new instrument of torture is forced into his mouth in the shape of a bit, devised for the very purpose of inflicting pain, until, with temper and mouth both ruined, he passes into the hands of a 'bus-driver or cabman, when his bearing-rein is cast aside, and for the first time he is treated with common sense and humanity.

It is a severe penance to any man who loves a horse to walk along the fashionable streets or the Park, and to witness the sufferings of horses from this absurd and cruel practice.

Little does the benevolent dowager who sits absorbed in the pages of the last tract of the "Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" know of the sufferings of the two noble animals by whom she is leisurely drawn along the "Lady's Mile."

She probably fancies that the high prancing step, and the toss of the head which scatters flakes of foam at every step, are expressions of pride and

satisfaction at their task, when in fact they are occasioned by pain, and a vain attempt to obtain a momentary relief from their suffering.

Although the evil of bearing-reins has always been clear to me, as will be seen by any one who reads my introduction, the first time I expressed my opinion in public was at the annual meeting of the "Royal Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Animals" in 1868, following an eloquent and powerful speech by the late Earl of Romney. In the appendix I shall reproduce part of that speech, and my own also, as they have probably never been read by any one from that time to this. But no steps were taken to mitigate the evil; indeed, it has been increasing fearfully ever since, while the eyes of the carriage-driving public seem closed, and their hearts callous.

This last year I made another appeal through the newspapers. Several editors were kind enough to insert a few short letters of mine, which have been extensively read both in town and country, and I am happy to say with much good effect. Expressions of sympathy and encouragement have come to me from all quarters. Many noblemen, gentlemen, and ladies have written to thank and encourage me to persevere—some to say they never have used bearing-reins, some that they

shall in future abolish them, or that they have done so, and that their horses go much better without them.

Lord Portsmouth, for instance, a high authority, says :—"I never allow a bearing-rein to be used in my establishment, nor did my father before me; I am sure they are both useless and cruel."

Thirty or forty years ago, when country people were obliged to drive long distances, the simple bearing-rein was sometimes used, but then it was always unfastened in going up hill, to ease the horse and allow him to exert his strength; but now I seldom or never see a bearing-rein unfastened, even when standing for hours.

At that time four-in-hands were much more common than they are now, as also were fast coaches, and then there were plenty of good coachmen. The "Tantivy" was a famous coach, going from London to Birmingham, *viâ* Oxford, 120 miles each day. There were four drivers, three of whom used the simple bearing-rein, but Cracknell, who drove from London to Oxford, never did. I well remember sitting on the box with him when one of his fellow-coachmen was ill, and for months he drove the whole distance in one day, and back the next, ten miles an hour, including stoppages, and was always exact to time. His horses had no

bearing-reins or cruppers, and soon after that all the other coachmen left them off. But now some gentlemen who drive "four-in-hand" say they cannot hold their horses without gag-reins, curbs, and sharp bits, and even then when they pull up a groom or two has to stand at their heads to keep them quiet, they being so irritated by all those barbarous contrivances.

These are some of the facts and arguments with which I plead the cause of this long-suffering and much-abused friend and slave of man. I have written warmly, but I believe truthfully; and now I only ask my readers to look with observing and unprejudiced eyes upon their own and other horses, and they will see that I have not exaggerated the case. Many, I am sure, will then agree with me, and act as common sense and humanity dictate, abandoning at once and for ever the use of the gag bearing-rein.

APPENDIX.

SINCE my first edition was printed, we have had to lament the loss of one who, in his interesting works on various subjects, has said much to deprecate this form of cruelty; he was one of the first to give me sympathy and encouragement, and I have a melancholy pleasure in producing a short letter from him, as his valuable opinion must give weight to mine.

"DEAR MR. FLOWER,—Your letter in the *Daily News* of to-day looks well, and I trust will have a good effect. You have evidently been careful not in the least to exaggerate the suffering and the mischief caused by this foolish and detestable bearing-rein.

"Yours very truly,

"ARTHUR HELPS."

CRUELTY TO HORSES.

To the Editor of the "Times."

SIR,—Much has been written and said about cruelty to animals, and a very excellent Society is doing much to suppress it, in many ways very successfully; but there is one most cruel and barbarous practice going on all round us, of which they take no notice, possibly because the perpetrators are in the higher classes of society, which really makes it much worse, for they ought to know better. This stupid and cruel practice is the use of the gag or Bedouin bearing-rein to carriage-horses; which not only puts the animal to present torture, but by forcing the head into an unnatural position, brings on many painful and fatal disorders. Let any one watch the horses in the Park, or standing as they do for hours at the theatres, shops, &c., with foaming mouths, and tongues swollen and hanging out, trying to get a little ease to their poor heads and necks, by tossing them up, putting them sideways, or in any possible position, vainly appealing to their unheeding or ignorant masters, or coachmen, to slacken, if only for a few minutes, the torturing rein, and then say if we can call ourselves a humane people? Probably, the master or mistress only hires the horses, and cares nothing about them, so long as they get through their work, perhaps thinking that a horse with his head stuck up in the air looks finer than in a natural and graceful position. Many other evils of this bearing-rein might be pointed out, especially when coupled, as they frequently are, with one or other of the atrocious bits now in use; but what I have now said may be enough to draw the attention of some who, while they consider themselves lovers of

humanity, and are anxious to suppress cruelty when they see it in isolated cases, and among the lower orders, yet are all the time inflicting it in this aggravated and senseless manner.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

E. F. Flower.

THE GAG BEARING-REIN.

To the Editor of the "Daily News," August 20.

Sir,—You were so good as to insert a letter from me on this subject in your impression of the 10th inst., and I have been kindly responded to by many communications, public and private. I have also to thank you heartily in the name of humanity for your excellent article on the 11th. Surely, enough, one might think, had been said on this subject, but such evils are slow of cure. I have always paid much attention to horses and to their treatment, and since I have lived in London have been particularly struck with the general unkindness of coachmen to their dumb slaves, and the ignorance and indifference of masters and mistresses. I seldom ride in the Park or in the fashionable streets during the season without having my feelings outraged by some flagrant sight of suffering and cruelty. When I have occasionally called the attention of the coachman to it, or asked him to slacken a rein, he generally tells me to mind my own business, and if I spoke to the master, he would probably say, "Oh, the horses are not mine, I only hire them." Whereas if I speak to a carter, and explain to him how much more comfortable the animal would draw his load if left free, he usually thanks me, and often does what I suggest.

Indeed, I find as a rule much less sympathy between drivers and their horses in the upper than in the lower classes, and yet it is to prosecute the latter that the energies and funds of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals are applied. Beyond printing arguments, and distributing them to those who ask for them, the Society say they can do nothing; but surely this infliction of the gag bearing-rein ought to come within the Act for "torturing animals," under which there are hundreds of convictions every year. I have not heard of one gentleman or gentleman's coachman being brought to justice, though his horses may stand gagged and tortured for half the night. No wonder there are so many complaints of the want of good horses, of the high price, and of their wearing out so soon. By inserting this you will oblige yours obediently,

E. F. Flower.

GAG BEARING-REINS.

To the Editor of the "Daily News."

Sir,—Allow me space for a few lines on one point which I omitted in my former letter on this subject. There is frequently a cross-bar at the bottom of the bit, and when the bearing-rein is taken away, it is possible that the horse, by rubbing the pole or shaft, may catch the bit on it, and cause an accident, therefore the cross-bar ought to be cut away (it is of no use), or an easy bit substituted, or a plain snaffle, which for single harness is best of all, if a coachman has good hands, and knows how to drive by judicious management, and not, as is too often the case, entirely by main force, though with some horses it may be necessary to have a curb, especially if their mouths have been spoiled by bad driving.

I am happy to know that in consequence of the present discussion, some of your readers have abolished the barbarous invention of the gag bearing-rein, and they assure me their horses go much better.

Yours obediently,

E. F. Flower.

AN EARNEST APPEAL TO LADIES WHO OWN OR DRIVE CARRIAGE-HORSES.

Cruelty of the Gag Bit and Bearing-rein.

You all know the oft-quoted lines of Grey :—

"Where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise."

Upon that principle, I suppose, people shut their eyes to much of the misery going on around them; but if by knowledge they can remedy the evil, it is surely folly to be ignorant. Ladies little know the amount of pain that is being inflicted upon their carriage-horses by the use of the gag bearing-rein, and the atrociously sharp bits and curbs which their coachmen are so fond of using. When next you step out of your carriage, or go into the Park or fashionable streets, just look at the animals' mouths, which are naturally as sensitive as any part of your own frame—how they are frequently foaming, quivering, lacerated by all that torturing iron, while their heads are gagged up by a strong leather rein, through a double pulley, to the saddle, which is made tight to the tail by the crupper; so that the mouth and tail of the poor animal are tied together; and in that way they have to draw their load or stand for hours at theatres, shops, &c., unrelieved, while probably the coachman amuses himself by "touching them up" with his whip if they venture by restlessness to show the agony they are enduring.

The coachman's excuse for extra sharp bits, curbs, and reins generally is that the horses pull. Of course they pull when they are hurt, to get away from the pain. Few horses pull whose mouths have not been spoiled by rough hands and hard bits. Ladies are accused of liking to see horses with their heads stuck up in the air (like wooden rocking-horses)

and their legs prancing. Surely it is because they do not know how much more graceful a well-fed, not overworked horse is in its free, natural attitudes. Do, ladies, look at your horses' mouths; do not mind what your coachmen say about the necessity of such barbarous atrocities of gag bearing-reins and sharp bits, and the irritating use of the whip; make yourself acquainted with the animals to whom you owe so much of your comfort and pleasure—they will well repay you for any consideration and kindness. Let them be driven with as little pain to themselves as possible, and there will be far less danger of their running away, kicking, stumbling, or falling down, as nearly all accidents arise from some irritating cause to the horse, either in the harness or the driver.

CELINA FLOWER.

"ANOTHER source of great suffering to animals, and with which I am less practically acquainted, is the use of the bit. What is suitable for one horse is not suitable for another; and in changing a bit, it is a matter of the greatest consequence that it is suitable, otherwise you will be putting the animal to unnecessary pain. And then there is the bearing-rein: the use of this shows a want of information and knowledge of the horse, and a great lack of knowing what are the capabilities of the animal."—*Extract from Speech delivered at Torquay by Baroness Burdett Coutts* (1874).

From the "Daily News," August 12th, 1874.

IN our impression on Monday a Correspondent made an appeal to the owners or hirers of carriage-horses to abandon the use of the gag bearing-rein, which inflicts a very considerable amount of pain and discomfort upon these much-enduring

animals. We fancy that the ladies and gentlemen in question have no idea whatever of the torture which is thus inflicted on horses, or they would immediately order their grooms to go back to the old bearing-reins, or abandon both altogether. The old one was bad enough, to be sure. Its only object was to keep the head of the horse high in the air, and to make it paw and rear at starting, for the admiration of nurserymaids; but it did not at all add to the safety of the inmates of the carriage in going down hill, when the horse could not possibly recover from a stumble, while the unfortunate animal, in going up hill, lost that chance of "putting its head down to its work" which is natural to beasts of draught. The gag bearing-rein, however, is infinitely worse in its operation, chaining up the animal's head in an unnatural and cramped position; while, as our Correspondent says, it is generally used in combination with a bit so inhumanly constructed as to provoke the temper of the quietest horse going. It is no wonder that perfectly-broken horses hired for the season from some job-master are returned to him at the end of three months in a fair way to become habitual jibbers, through the fashion in which they have been treated by some reckless groom who wants to cut a dash at starting. As for gentlemen who own the horses they drive, the comfort of these animals should be to them a matter of constant attention, and not left to depend on the caprice or ignorance of a servant. We are sorry to hear, moreover, that this evil English fashion is being copied abroad, where bearing-reins of every description were at one time wholly unknown. Of course, whatever England does in the way of horses and carriages must seem good in the eyes of the lucky speculator on the Bourse, whose only aim is to have a gorgeous turn-out in the Bois. But English gentlemen are said to know their horses, and have a tender care for them; and we shall be glad to find the instrument of torture we have mentioned put aside as unworthy of the humaner tendencies of our time.

From the "Evening Standard."

In another column our readers will see that Mr. Flower renews his protest against bearing-reins, and lays before the public his own experience. What he says on the subject is well worthy of attention, and cannot be dismissed as the utterance of some unpractical humanitarian. For a generation past the writer has been pretty well known as a cross-country rider in Warwickshire, and he is, therefore, presumably well qualified to speak about horses. And the bearing-rein question is one which ought, just now, certainly to engage the attention of those who care to do real work in the prevention of cruelty to animals. It is whispered that when the conference of humanitarians was recently in session at the Albert Hall, there were some fine specimens of horse-torture to be seen in the waiting carriages outside. Besides, the old-fashioned bearing-rein, which was sometimes not worse than merely uncomfortable, is being superseded by a bearing-rein which hauls at the bit by a pulley, giving a pull of two pounds at the mouth for every one on the rein. This, when tightly fitted, has the unsightly effect of sometimes causing the tongue of the horse to hang out of its mouth. So it is supplemented by a curb-bit fitted with a hoop, in which the tongue is held straight, the bar of the curb passing under the tongue, and acting cruelly on the most tender and sensitive part of the mouth. Not only are such fashions as these cruel, but their adoption spoils good horses, and indicates that in all probability the coachman knows but little of his business.

GAG BEARING-REINS.

From the "Spectator."

A correspondent of more than one of the morning papers, Mr. E. F. Flower, has been descanting with great force and

good sense on the absurdity of bearing-reins, a part of the harness which has no effect on the horse except an irritating one, which, when a "gag bearing-rein" is used, as it is now more and more frequently in London, is a simple instrument of torture. The truth is that the popularity of bearing-reins is due almost entirely to grooms and coachmen, who have an ignorant liking for that uneasy motion of the horse's head which it induces, and which, they think, imposes on the world as "fire." Now, a very large number of the class of self-made rich men, having no knowledge of their own horses, are completely in the hands of their coachmen and grooms, and yield an implicit faith, therefore, to the efficiency of the bearing-rein. If a few long-haired gentlemen or ladies would try how far it would add to the freedom of their own movements to have their back hair fastened tight down to the small of their waists, they would form a better notion of the delights and utilities of the bearing-rein.

"In England," says an American paper, "the greatest cruelty to horses comes from the use of the bearing-rein, which is used for pomposity. The horses, with heads stuck in the air, and mouths fretted and foaming, look so much more dashing and spirited! The other day, while the Congress concerning cruelty was in session, there was a long line of coaches in front of the building, and in many horses were suffering most intensely, while the wealthy owners were weeping over the woes of the animals of the poor."

To the Editor of the "Daily News."

Sept. 12.

Sir,—I have just received the following letter, and as it bears forcibly upon the subject of my former letters to you, I shall be obliged by your giving it a place in your valuable paper. Yours obediently,

E. F. FLOWER.

35, *Hyde Park Gardens, Sept.* 5.

"*Derby, Sept. 4.*

"My Dear Sir,—I have read with deep interest your letter of the 10th of last month relative to the use of bearing-reins, as they are now frequently applied to single and double harness. Every one who has noticed, as you have done, the torture to which some horses are subjected by having their heads held in such an unnatural position for a length of time, must feel with you the desirability of abating this evil as much as possible. You have only alluded to horses driven in London, but thousands of poor animals are sadly irritated and injured throughout the country by the improper use of the bearing-rein. As soon as I had read your admirable letter on this subject, two circumstances occurred to my mind which I doubt not will interest you. About 40 years ago I was driving with my father in a gig, when, on descending a slight hill, the horse, a very valuable one, stumbled.

"My father, having great strength in his arms, and being an unusually good whip, retained his seat, and although the poor animal broke his knees badly, he recovered himself before we alighted. We noticed the repeated but fruitless efforts the poor horse made to save himself from falling, and in doing this his weight upon the bearing-rein actually drew the hook (which was the old-fashioned D-shaped one) straight out, which liberated the rein, and allowed the horse to regain his feet. We noticed the ill effect of the bearing-rein, and discarded its use for the future; and it is my firm belief, from personal observation and matured experience, that horses do their work with infinitely less fatigue to themselves and less danger in falling, in case they stumble, if they have the free use of their heads. About the same period my father purchased a nearly thoroughbred mare for a fraction of her value, in consequence of the gentleman to whom she belonged being unable to drive her. She had a tender mouth, and the moment the coachman put the Bedouin rein on the hook of the pad she reared and

plunged so violently as to be really dangerous; but after being driven by us a few times without a bearing-rein, she became the most docile creature ever driven in single or double harness.

"There are undoubtedly some few horses whose heads cannot be sufficiently held up to be driven with comfort without the bearing-rein, but these need not be so tight as to cause the horse pain, or prevent his putting his head in a natural position.

"In the great majority of cases it would prove greatly to the interest of all owners of horses to discard the use of the bearing or Bedouin reins. Yours very truly,

"HERBERT M. HOLMES.

E. F. Flower, Esq.

"P.S.—When I am again in town, I shall be much pleased to spend an hour with you, and hear the progress you are making in your philanthropic efforts in behalf of the London horses. I am glad to say there is little to complain of in this part of the country; several gentlemen have abandoned the use of bearing-reins since reading your letters in our local papers. One, who drives into town most days eight miles of hilly road, assures me he does it now in a quarter of an hour less time, and with less distress to the horses."

Part of a Speech by the late Earl of Romney at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1868.

"I WILL now speak of the upper classes. I regret to say that a practice is now being revived which was in vogue some thirty or forty years ago, but had been discontinued, and that is putting bearing-reins upon the horses. I have no doubt that half the persons who adopt this practice are quite unconscious of the cruelty of it. I well recollect that when Sir Francis Head came over from North America, he drew atten-

tion to the extreme folly, without going further than that, when you want an animal to work, of putting something upon him which tends to restrain him from doing that work. For some time the foolish fashion went out, but I regret to say that it seems now to be reviving. It must be a source of grief to see the number of animals in carriages to which this bearing-rein is applied. The first thing is, whatever may be the form of the neck of the horse, to bring him so to speak into the same line, and the bearing-rein is introduced in order to bring his head into the required position. He is then attached to a carriage, and what is the next step? Perhaps the carriage is ordered to the door a couple of hours before it suits the convenience of the riders to enter it, and they let the horse stand there exposed to the heat of the sun and the biting of the flies; and there is the wretched animal with his head stuck up in the air, unable to drive away a fly; and among those persons who allow that, let me earnestly ask are there any ladies or gentlemen who come here and satisfy their conscience by subscribing a guinea a year to this Society, in order that some wretched costermonger, who has to maintain himself and family by working a donkey, may be brought before a magistrate, committed and punished because his animal has got a sore? Those persons, by their want of sympathy, teach the custom until it comes down to, and is adopted by, the costermonger. If I had the power, I should like to put these people out in the sun half undressed, and let the flies bite them, because they would very soon be able to understand what torture they were inflicting upon those poor unfortunate animals; for while the wealthy classes can have no excuse for their cruelty, often the poor costermonger pleads poverty and the wants of his family as an excuse. The question is, can anything be done by this Society to obviate the evils to which I have referred? Is there any mode which can be suggested to these persons in order to show the mischief which they are doing? I was talking to a job-master and veterinary-surgeon

this morning upon the subject, and he assured me that much mischief was done, and that the effect of the bearing-rein upon the construction of some portion of the throat of the horse was to make them roarers, so that we are not only foolish to use such an appliance, but we are wicked as well. The Secretary informs me that there is a book written upon the subject. I think it would be worth while if we were to send it to persons of influence, in order that they may have the subject brought to their notice."

Mr. FLOWER:—"I am happy that the noble Lord who has preceded me has touched upon the subject upon which I was anxious to speak, when I was asked to second this resolution. I think that attention must be called to the different departments, if I may so express myself, of the cruelty question to animals; and the particular department to which my attention has been called is that which the noble Lord on my left has so graphically and ably exposed, and to which the higher classes of society have not had their attention sufficiently called, namely, the bearing-rein. Having had, both in America and in England, more than fifty years' experience of the horse, I am prepared to affirm (and I feel assured that you will not omit to attend to the subject) that there is not a more unnecessary or gratuitous cruelty than the bearing-rein as it is now put on the horse by the higher class of society. Among the lower class of society, with whom I have often had to deal, I have got the answer, 'Look at that horse and compare him with mine.' I will tell you the difference. The bearing-rein which Sir Francis Head abolished by good writing was comparatively a humane bearing-rein to many bearing-reins which we see in London at the present time. I must describe to you what this bearing-rein practically is. In the first place I must tell you that the old-fashioned bearing-rein merely took a single rein from each side of the bit, and was fastened to the collar or the saddle. The new-fashioned bearing-rein, or Bedouin or gag bearing-rein, is fastened first to the head of the

bridle against the horse's ears, and then a small round piece of leather comes down and passes through a ring in the horse's bit. It is then passed over the collar to the saddle, and he is reined in by the groom. What is the effect of that? Instead of the groom, when he reins up the horse, exerting the power of a pound weight, this acts as a pulley, and he exerts the power of two pounds. Probably people do not sufficiently consider this when they have these bearing-reins. I will ask you philanthropic gentlemen and tender-hearted ladies only to walk down St. James's Street on a Drawing Room day, and see the agony which is caused to exist there. Ladies in their carriages, going to the Drawing Room, and gentlemen going to the Drawing Room, do not attend to these matters; the coachman on the box, to save a little trouble in the management of his horses, folding his arms; the footman not getting off, as he should do, to relieve the head when the horse is standing still—all are accessories to what I denounce as a great and unnecessary cruelty which is practised at the present day. I fully bear out what has been said before me, as I feel so strongly on the subject, having known great injury to arise to horses who have been so treated. Speaking to a dealer some years ago upon the subject, I asked him how it was he was gradually tightening up horses' heads from day to day before he sold them. He said that many people would not buy them unless he did so—that London people always wanted their horses to carry their heads high and to step high; and he said, 'another thing is, it soon wears them out, and they come for another pair of horses.' If a horse is naturally a high-stepping one, that is one thing, but to get a horse out of his natural gait I hold to be wanton cruelty. Some years ago all the coach-horses had bearing-reins, until Sir Francis Head wrote them down. I very well remember observing to a coachman on one occasion that he had not the bearing-rein. He said that he had been reading the writings of Sir Francis Head, and (said he), 'How do you imagine that a horse can be

the better for having his head and his tail tied together,' for from the crupper to the mouth there is a tightness which is very bad for the horse. There is one thing which I wish you would observe, and get your friends to observe also, because if you were to do that we should get rid of the tightness of these bearing-reins. Many of you have no doubt noticed cab-horses and omnibus-horses at work without any bearing-reins at all. There are many horses which have been worked with a bearing-rein, but would not have strength to do their work if the bearing-rein were applied to them now. They work without the bearing-rein, and they do not tumble down. You will see in St. James's Street, when there is a Drawing Room, horses stand for two or three hours together. What is the expression of their countenance? They throw their heads first on one side and then on the other. They are trussed up like a fowl going to be roasted. They are put in that position which produces immense pain, which is wanton cruelty.

"I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to get your friends to consider this point, for I have heard from the very members of this Society, 'Oh, no, it is nothing at all—it is merely a matter of habit;' but I assure you that until this cruel bearing-rein is done away with, there is little to be done with the ordinary habits of the lower classes of society. I have used bearing-reins myself with some particular horses, but I have never used the gag bearing-rein. It is this particular instrument which, after Sir Francis Head had done away with the old bearing-rein, some saddler invented to sell. I ask you to distinguish between the two things. A slack bearing-rein which is put on many of the working horses, though I do not think them good things, is a comparatively innocuous contrivance, while the bearing-rein strapped up with the tightness with which you see it, is one of the most cruel things which could exist; and I do not think you could do better, when the London season begins, than to have some paper drawn up and sent to every person who keeps a carriage and horses in

London. It has been said, 'The Society must not interfere with private rights.' Why, you are not interfering with private rights, but you are interfering with private wrongs. In this same way the Society is interfering all day long with private rights, as these abuses are called. But attention being drawn to this subject, the constant watching it and speaking about it, that will get this abuse done away with. I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, that living in a country neighbourhood as I do, I come to London sometimes with a great deal of pleasure; but when I see these cruelties, and see the horses pulled up with that gag-rein, the pain is such that I have felt utterly disgusted with it, and have felt inclined to leave London at once. The noble Lord who preceded me so ably described this evil that perhaps it was unnecessary for me to have made the observations I have, but I wish to bear my testimony to that of this Society against the cruelty and pernicious effect of the bearing-rein."

"Land and Water," January 8, 1876.

DECLINE OF THE BEARING-REIN.

That veteran champion of humanity on the part of the horse, Mr. E. F. Flower, has given valuable evidence that his continued philippics against the use of the bearing-rein have to a certain extent been successful. In a letter to the daily papers, dated the 3rd inst., he states that a year ago there was scarcely a pair of carriage-horses to be seen in London without gag bearing-reins. In October last, an observer noticed 15 per cent. without them. During the previous week, Mr. Flower commissioned a reliable person to watch for an hour in Oxford Street and the Park, and he counted 260 carriages, pairs and singles, and of these eighty-three wore no bearing-reins, or thirty-one per cent., which fully justifies Mr. Flower in saying that the cause he advocates is progressing. We agree

with him that the owners are the principal people to blame, for if a coachman says he "can't" drive certain horses without bearing-reins, the remedy is simple—get a coachman who can. The word "can't" should never be in the vocabulary of any really willing and trustworthy servant.

When Frederick the Great, who was a martinet in his way, but nevertheless a sensible man, once wanted to introduce a new kind of helmet, his men objected to the change proposed in their accoutrements. However, Frederick was determined to have his way, and at the next review he decked out one of his crack regiments with the new helmet. They were supposed to charge gallantly over a plain, and take an invisible battery, but the way in which their helmets tumbled off rather marred the general effect, and made them look as though they had been exposed to several charges of grapeshot, instead of coming out unscathed. It naturally annoyed Frederick very much, but his men all said that the helmets would not stick on. Frederick said they must, and in the next review every man that lost his helmet should get a flogging. At the second review a much fewer number of helmets were lost, but their owners received the flogging. At the third review the doffed helmets could be counted on the fingers, instead of hundreds, as in the first instance, and still the delinquents were flogged. At last, after about three months of this rule, the helmets stuck on in the most marvellous manner, and continued to do so all throughout his reign.

We do not mean to say that coachmen should be flogged in the way they frequently flog their horses, but we do say that if masters would take the trouble to see that their coachmen obeyed their orders with regard to the bearing-rein, horses would be much less fretted, and last a good deal longer, while the cause of humanity would be greatly promoted. For we fully believe that nine out of ten horses, when properly handled—we use the word "handled," not "broken," because

the horse is an animal of all others most nervous, while at the same time docile, and requires to be coaxed and tenderly taught, not put into irons and "broken"—would do far more work with their heads and necks free, and with infinitely greater ease to themselves, than when gagged by the ordinary bearing-rein. Mr. Flower has our full sympathy, and we believe that in this instance he is not tilting at a windmill in vain.

The Editor of the "Wexford Independent" writes, on January 15th,

"SOME time back we reviewed Mr. Flower's pamphlet, and since then we declined using the bearing-rein on our own horses; and we find that it had the effect of improving both their pace and temper, besides abolishing the torture to which the poor animals were subjected."

E. W. L.

HORSES AND HARNESS.

The four hearse-horses especially reared and pranced, and showed their highest action, as if they knew a man was dead, and triumphed in it. "They break us, drive us, ride us, ill-treat, abuse, and maim us for their pleasure. But they die. Hurrah! they die!"—CHARLES DICKENS, from "Martin Chuzzlewit."

WHEN the first edition of my little pamphlet, "Bits and Bearing-Reins," was published, only last year, I hoped to call the attention of some of the owners and drivers of carriage-horses to the unnecessary pain inflicted by severe bits and gag bearing-reins, as they were then used; but I did not expect that my appeal would be so warmly responded to, or so soon produce a visibly good effect. That result could not have been obtained by my single efforts: they have been liberally and largely aided by many friends, known and unknown, and especially by the Press, not only in England, but in Scotland and Ireland. The spark of benevolence which I endeavoured to light they fanned into a flame.

Newspapers, journals, magazines, sporting and religious papers, came forward to denounce the cruelty of the present fashionable system of treating horses, and to encourage me to proceed in my endeavours to obtain a more humane and sensible method.

It is about two years since I entered upon this crusade, and no one can guess the amount of labour and anxiety it involves. It seems a small subject, and yet it extends everywhere. In the scale of created beings, next to the human race certainly comes the horse. For intelligence, usefulness, sensitiveness, he is second only to man, and withal he is so perfectly helpless, so easily subdued, less capable of self-defence than almost any other animal, his usual fate is to have his years of health and strength unnaturally shortened by injudicious and cruel treatment, and when age comes on, and strength fails, to be put to harder work, with coarser and less food, and more comfortless stall, going down and down, till death releases him. Many of these valuable animals, for which hundreds of pounds are now given, will in a short time be sold for as many shillings, even by people who have had years of work out of them, and could well afford mercifully to insure them from future hardship, by having them put

to a quick and painless death. No other animal has so hard a life, or serves his taskmaster so willingly and so generously; he acts a conspicuous part in the affairs of human life; we want him at every turn; for drudgery, for pleasure, for show, we call in his aid; therefore let us not needlessly add to his burdens by wanton cruelty or wilful ignorance.

As I have denounced severe bits and gag bearing-reins, many people ask my advice as to what should be substituted, and what kind of harness I would recommend. I have thought earnestly upon the subject, and consulted many eminently practical men; in the following pages I shall give some of the conclusions to which I have arrived, and which, with the aid of the engravings, I think will be clear. Of course it is not possible to lay down rules which will suit all cases, especially where there are such various and powerful elements to be worked upon, masters, mistresses, coachmen, grooms, horses, all of different tempers and habits; but what I say, if carried out in a *kind and helpful spirit*, will apply to most cases, and I feel sure would materially lessen the number of accidents, and the trouble of driving what are called unruly horses.

I have a vast amount of material which has come to me in letters from all parts of the kingdom and from abroad; also articles, paragraphs, letters, &c., which have appeared in newspapers, &c.; from these I must cull a few to show that my opinions are upheld by many practical and experienced men of all classes, noblemen, gentlemen, coachmen, several first-class saddlers, and by all humanitarians who have thought upon the subject.

It is ignorance, prejudice, fashion, and—in too many cases—wilful cruelty that has to be contended with. I am happy to have made many converts, and hope to be able to go on talking, writing, with the assistance of my wife, probably boring my friends and the public, till the sight, now every day to be seen, of horses foaming, fretting, prancing, maddened with pain from their curbs, gags, and whips, is banished from this so-called civilised country. Go into the Park or fashionable streets, just look at the gagged-up horses, either standing or in motion, and you will see that my picture of "Torture" is no exaggeration; and the fair occupants of the carriages sit smilingly unconscious of the pain they are causing; the coachman careless of it, perhaps rejoicing that he has

the power to tyrannise over the unhappy victims of his ignorance, bad temper, or conceit.

Then, what a relief it is to the eye and the feelings to see the happy exceptions: a beautiful pair stepping freely and elegantly, with the natural graceful curve of the back and neck, pleasure, not pain, expressed in the countenances (for horses can express both), answering instinctively to every touch of the reins, guided by light and gentle hands—that is, indeed, a beautiful sight; why is it not oftener seen? The answer, I suppose, is that coachmen do not know how to drive: as "Nimrod" observes, "to be a coachman you must take your degree." Then why not have a school for coachmen as well as for cookery? it is quite as much needed: surely the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals could not spend a part of their large incomings better than in establishing one, and *leading* public opinion, instead of "waiting for it to be more advanced upon the subject," as one of their delegates said at a late public meeting.

When I was travelling in Scotland last autumn I saw no bearing-reins but those that were imported by a few Londoners, whose coachmen are trying to engraft the absurd practice even in that hilly country. Bad example is

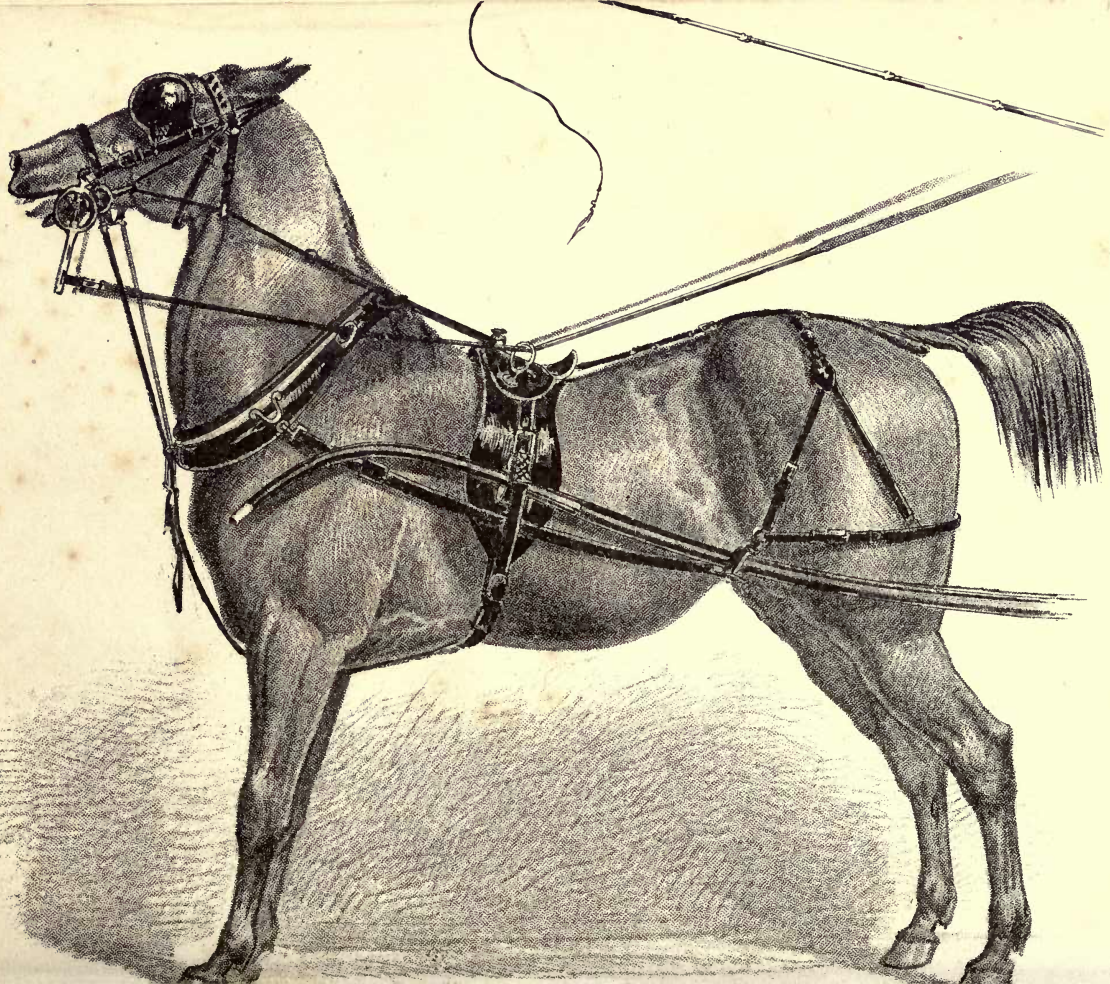
contagious, and quickly followed; but it takes line upon line, and precept upon precept, to inculcate even a little common sense, especially when it involves a slight amount of self-sacrifice or trouble, either in learning or teaching.

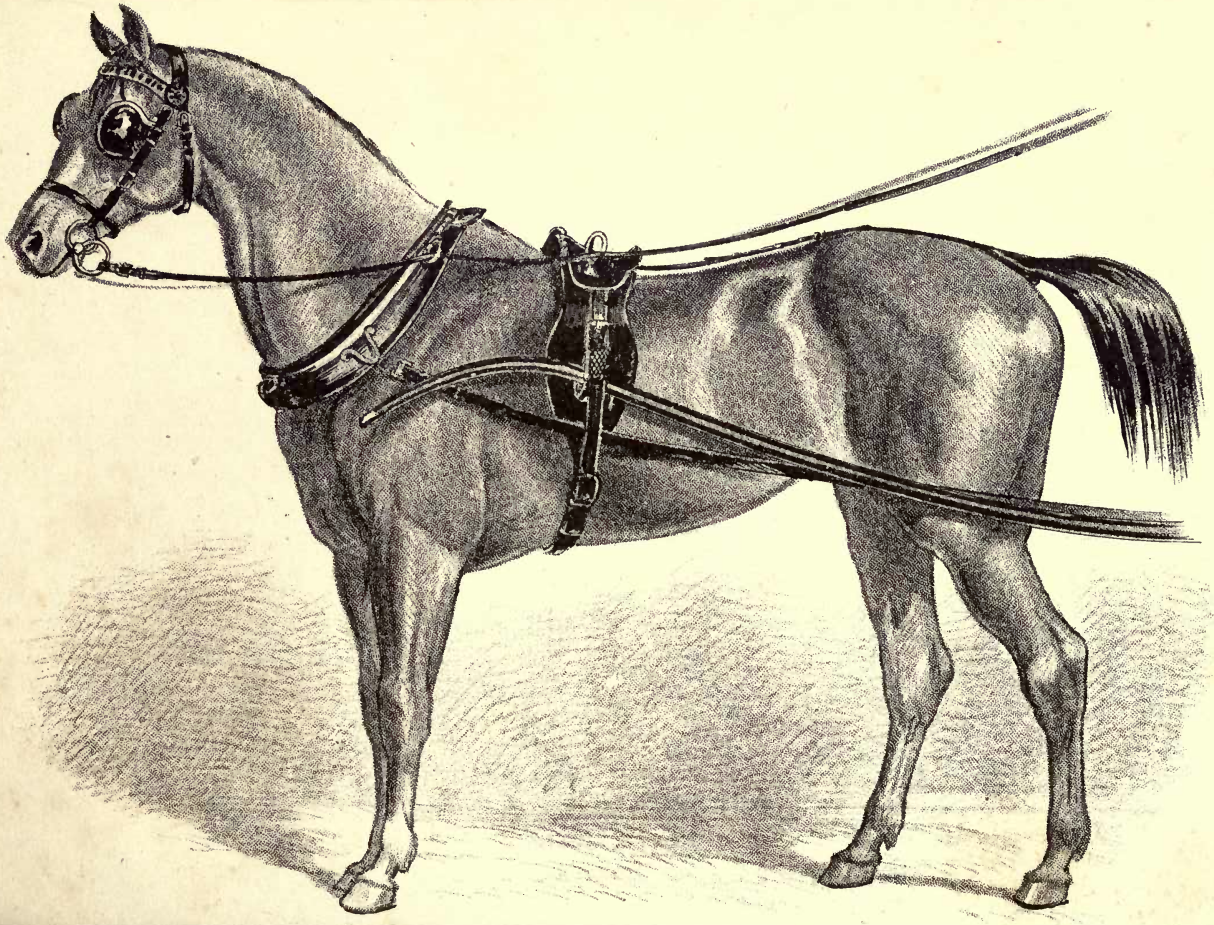
I have not said much about bearing-reins for cart-horses, though their use is even more to be condemned than those for lighter draft, without even the poor excuse of wishing to improve the horse's appearance. Depriving the animal of the use of the muscles of his neck and shoulders, which the bearing-rein always does in a greater or less degree, is quite as absurd as it would be to tie up one of his legs, and then expect him to do his work equally well.*

In No. 1 is shown the too prevalent mode of harnessing horses. A tight bearing-rein to pull his head up, a fixed martingale to pull it down, close blinkers to prevent his seeing his way, a crupper, which is obliged to be tight, to hold

* In Glasgow the cart-horses work without bearing-reins; but in Liverpool and Manchester the poor creatures tug at their heavy loads under the disadvantage of being deprived of the use of some of their most valuable muscles; their owners and drivers, following blind custom, think not, see not, feel not; why cannot some enlightened, humane individuals, especially those who belong to the Society whose express vocation it is to abolish cruelty, see to these abuses, and try to rectify them?

Plate 1.





NEW STYLE OF HARNESS—EASE.

the bearing-rein in place, so that his head and tail are tied tightly together. To obtain a little ease by shortening his back, when standing still, he extends his fore legs beyond their natural position, as seen in the plate, while the hinder ones are proportionably thrown back, for the ill effects of which see the letter of Mr. Darby (Page 58). The tight bearing-rein, by holding the head in an unnatural and fixed position, strains the windpipe and respiratory organs, inducing roaring and other maladies, as shown in the letter from Mr. Gill (Page 58). The front part of the bridle is frequently too short, thereby hurting the lower part of the ears, also the winker strap, which when tight, besides drawing the winkers too close, pulls forward the top of the bridle, so as to press upon and hurt the back of the ears, and when the horse shows signs of uneasiness, by throwing up his head, &c., he is punished by more and tighter straps, the coachman seldom troubling himself to find out and remedy the cause of the irritation.

All harness is more or less an encumbrance, and here (Plate 2) I have left all that is necessary in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, doing away with bearing-reins, martingale, hook on the pad, swivel on the throat-strap, and drop-strap. Of

course it must all fit well, and be properly adjusted.

Blinkers may afford protection to the eyes, if the driver is careless or cruel with his whip, as is often the case, but they should be always sufficiently wide apart to allow the horse to see his road and the objects before him (see Plate 3); but too frequently the poor animal is completely blindfolded, and then expected to act as if he had the use of his eyes. I have seen grooms, while leading horses with close blinkers, shamefully beat them when they have accidentally had their toes trodden on. No horse would tread on a man's toes if he could see how to avoid them; and certainly they would not be so apt to shy if they could look at the objects which alarm them. As to collars, I find that saddlers generally make them fit well. I have examined more than 100 carriage-horses without seeing a sore shoulder.

Many people have done away with the bearing-rein, and retain the bit with the cross-bar. I would advise that to be cut away, as the horse, having obtained more freedom of his head, may possibly, when standing, get the cross-bar caught on the end of the pole or shaft, unless they are made sufficiently long or short to prevent it.

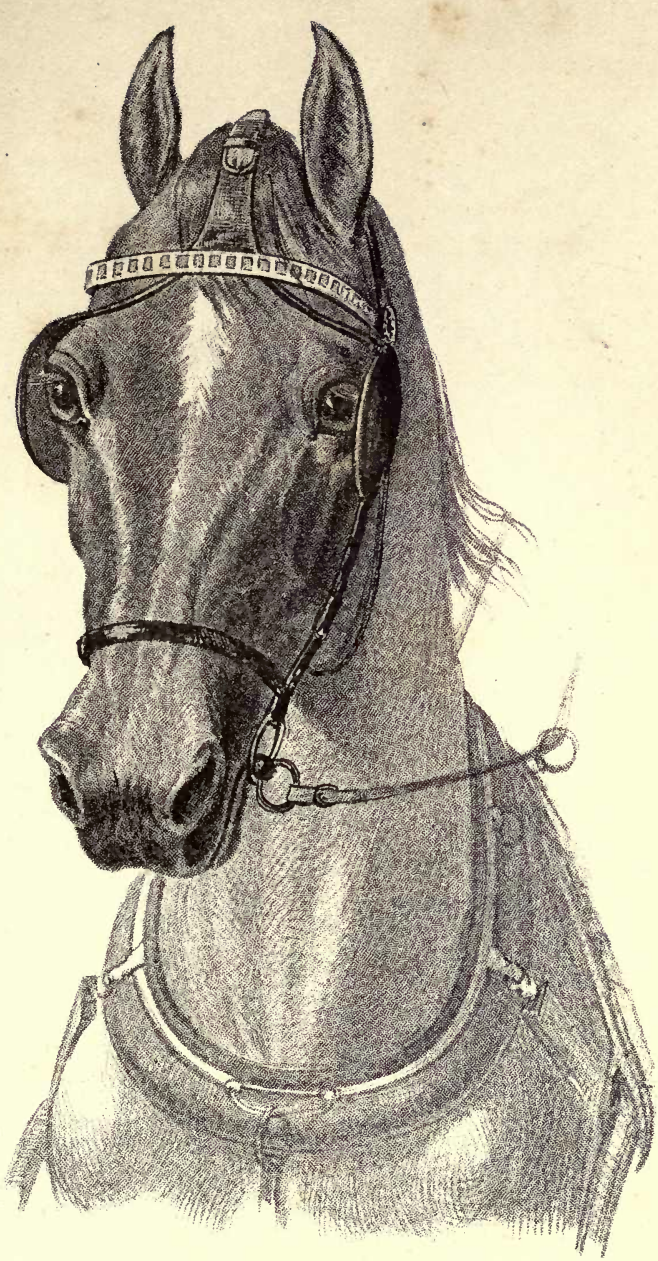


Plate 3.

SHEWING BLINKERS WIDE APART.

Maclure & Macdonald Lith^rs London

Also, if a horse holding his head naturally low has the bearing-rein taken away, and the bit with a chain-curb and a long lever retained (as in Plate 1), he must of necessity *bore*. Therefore the coachman must see that he has a proper bit, probably the No. 1 bit in Plate 4 would suit, which would allow the horse to carry his head naturally, neither *boring* nor *stargazing*.

But, alas! coachmen have frequently so little knowledge of the art of driving, and so little feeling for their horses, they foolishly fancy that every fresh restraint they can put upon them will make them safer and easier to drive; fashion also being in favour of the "wooden rocking-horse" style. Masters or mistresses care or know nothing about it. In nine cases out of ten they do not own the horses, only job them, so there is not the sympathy between them that property might give.

Last year at different times I hired three horses; the job-masters in each case saying they would not be responsible for the horses stumbling or falling if they were driven without bearing reins. However, I said I would take the responsibility; so I drove them several weeks without bearing-reins, and with easy bits, and

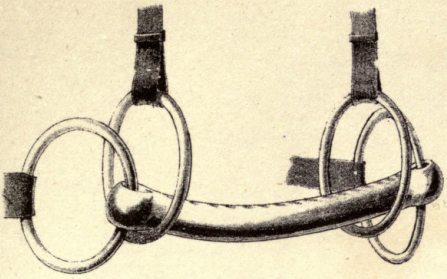
they went well and pleasantly without once stumbling.

No. 1 Bit. "Capon Driving-bit."

A ring snaffle, the mouth-piece having a slight curvature to avoid pressure on the tongue, and either plain, or a mild twist; it is strongly recommended by Mr. Aufrére, of Windermere, who writes thus, "I have read your excellent pamphlet on 'Gag Bits and Bearing-reins' with great pleasure. I have for years given up the use of both, considering them to be instruments of torture. I drive in the snaffle which I forward for your trial and acceptance, and I find it answer perfectly in every respect. I drive high-bred and spirited horses. They bend and go well in this bit, giving a steady and safe feel to the driver, and stand as quietly as if in their own boxes, and when waiting at any place do not rub at the pole-head, as if wishing to get rid of their head-gear. You may consider it heavy, but we find more purchase, and the horses go better than with the light and jointed snaffle. I use it both for single and double harness, and also for riding. After trial, I shall be glad of your opinion. We call it the 'Capon Driving-snaffle.'"

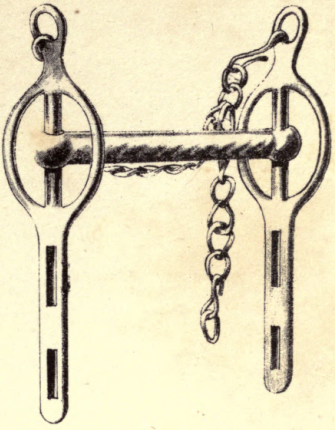
This is the bit which I use, and find it quite answers the above description. By looking at the

1



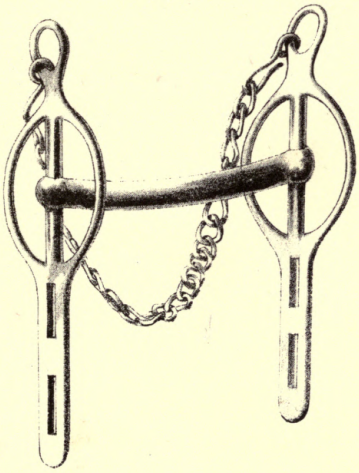
Capon driving Snaffle.

2



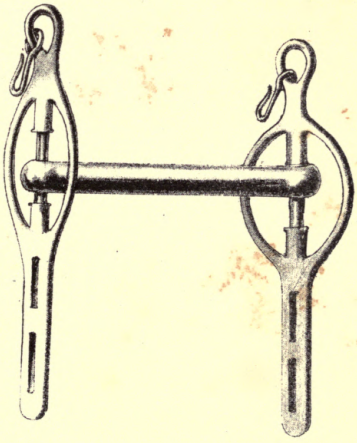
Fixed Liverpool Bit.

3



Cecil Bit.

4



Sliding Liverpool Bit.

Maclure & Macdonald, Lith^rs London.

plates, it can be seen that in this snaffle the bridle comes down into the ring, therefore it is necessary that it should be longer than with the other bits. Some people have tried this bit, and by not attending to this, have found the bit did not answer, when it would have done so had the bridle been lengthened so as to let the mouth-piece rest just above the tusks.

No. 2 is a *fixed* Liverpool bit, which many people prefer to the snaffle.

No. 3, "The Cecil Bit," is a fixed Liverpool bit, with a slight curve in the mouth-piece. This is the bit which in most cases I should recommend, both for double and single harness, driven in the cheek, without using the curb, unless absolutely necessary.

No. 4 is a sliding bit, generally called a Liverpool bit. I object to a sliding bit, because, as the coupling reins in double harness act crosswise, they are apt to pull the front half of the circle on to the horse's nostrils and cause great irritation. Besides that, when the sliding bit is worn, it frequently pinches the horse's lips. A fixed bit avoids these objections.

The following letter appeared in the *Times* last year; but I fear the excellent advice given is not much attended to. Therefore I say, abolish bearing-reins altogether.

BEARING-REINS.

To the Editor of the Times.

"Sir,—I was walking back last night from M. Salvini's magnificent acting in *Hamlet*, and passed rows of carriages drawn up in the ranks, the horses in which were in most cases throwing up their heads from the discomfort of their bearing-reins.

"Some persons advocate their entire suppression, but if put on loosely, and for short journeys, they are not objectionable.

"On the score of humanity, I would venture to appeal to their owners to give express directions to their coachmen to loosen the bearing-reins on every opportunity, but more especially at night, and in hot weather, when there are few to see whether the horses are forced to look smart.

"If left to themselves, the horses will rest well enough while waiting in the ranks, which they cannot do while strained at the then useless bearing-reins.

"Yours obediently,

"Westminster.

"Grosvenor House, London,
"*June* 24."

Lord Leigh wrote to me last year: "I am glad you have taken up this subject, as there is no doubt the London horses are much to be pitied, and using the bearing-rein is, as you say, a stupid and cruel practice."

He now says, "I congratulate you on your success, and trust the day is not far distant when a horse with a bearing-rein on him is as rare an object to be seen as a soldier in armour, and should that happy day arrive, you may have the satisfaction of feeling that you have done as great a service to the poor horses as Wilberforce did in his day to the poor slaves."

The following is from Admiral Rous: "Many thanks for your pamphlet on 'Bearing-reins.' I agree in every one of your sentiments; there may be singular cases of violent hard-mouthed horses, which a bearing-rein may be conducive to restrain, especially in a crowded city. I should add the abolition of blinkers: a horse hearing an unusual noise becomes alarmed when he cannot discover the cause, but with his eyes open he is as sensible as a human creature. The sketches of horses' heads in your book are beautifully correct, and worthy of preservation."

The late Sir Francis Head wrote to me, shortly before his death, "The ignorant, continued use of

this gag-bit in the mouth of a carriage-horse, whether in action or standing still, is an unnecessary, inexcusable, and barbarous piece of cruelty, and you will render a great service to the community, as well as to the horses, if you can succeed in suppressing it."

Colonel Somerset, who drives his fine team without bearing-reins, says that he drives his teams generally in ring snaffles, and has done so for some years. When horses are great pullers, he finds nothing so good as a leather bit, which he gets made at Mr. Latchford's, bitmaker, St. Martin's Lane. He says, "There can be no doubt that ninety-nine horses out of a hundred do not require bearing-reins."

He also writes to me; "Many thanks for sending me the pamphlet. I have had great experience in driving, and have had a great many really hard pullers, horses that have pulled harder the thirty-sixth mile than the first. I have a great many severe bits of every kind, and have found that the only bit for such horses is a leather bit. I drive all my teams generally in ring snaffles, and have done so for some years."

Having mentioned Mr. Latchford, I will quote a few lines from his excellent work on bridle bits, *The Loriner*. He says, "On no account punish

the horse, on no account hurt his mouth. When my friends have come to me concerning their unmanageable horses, I invariably find the poor animal has been over-bitted, or wrongly bitted, and recommend the easiest kind of bit, which in nine cases out of ten succeeds. I believe the horse has naturally no vice, that every description of vice found in the horse is created by the treatment he receives from those in whose care he is placed."

Mr. Torre, of Westbourne Terrace, writes to me, "You kindly gave me one of your pamphlets the other day, when I was on the look-out for a bit for one of my horses which pulled to such an extent that it was a labour to drive, in fact, I almost made up my mind to part with him. I have followed your directions, taking off the bearing-reins, and using a Liverpool bit, and now a child might drive him."

Another gentleman says, "I have read the little book on 'Bits and Bearing-reins' with much interest, and I hope profit. I have bought back my horse 'Banker;' he had always been ridden with a very tight curb, to make him show off, and it was nearly impossible to hold him when his mettle was up. My daughter now rides him with a snaffle, and he is perfectly manageable."

The following remark contained in a letter

The following letter is from Colonel Tyrwhitt to E. Cracknell: "I have been absent from London, or would have written sooner to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Flower's book, which you were good enough to forward to me, and which I have read with much interest. I entirely agree with Mr. Flower in what he says about the *abuse* of bearing-reins."

In reference to diseases brought on or aggravated by bearing-reins, I will quote two high authorities, one the well-known dealer in Rugby, Mr. Darby. He says, "I think Mr. Flower's pamphlet an excellent one, and explains all; but I go a little further myself, and say that horses standing for a long time gagged up, it alters their natural position so much that they stretch out their fore legs, while waiting at doors, throwing all their weight on their heels, causing inflammation, and eventually navicular lameness, naturally also putting such a strain upon the back sinews, that they often give way from that cause only."

Mr. Samuel Gill, veterinary surgeon in Hastings, says: "Members of the veterinary profession are by no means ignorant of the various diseases produced by the use of the bearing-rein—roaring, apoplexy, coma, megrims, inflammation, and softening of the brain, all follow the barbarous

use of this rein. To imagine the animal is prevented from falling by this reining up the head is an error. The pressure on the veins and arteries impeding the flow of blood, it is impossible for the animal stumbling to recover himself. I feel sure those who continue to use this torturing instrument have no idea of the pain they are inflicting, otherwise they would abolish this unnecessary portion of their harness, consigning it to the tomb of past absurdities."

The following circumstance was communicated to me by Mr. Woodley, of Upper Berkeley Street. He worked for the late B. Shaw, Esq., M.P., whose coachman ordered a very severe bit to be made for a horse that was very violent. On the bit being made, the servant exclaimed, "If I had known as much when I ordered it as I do now, it should not have been made, for one day, while exercising in the Park, the horse exceedingly fresh and restive, the bearing-rein being up to the last hole, the strap suddenly broke. I thought it was all over with me, but to my surprise the horse became at once manageable, and went beautifully, and the severe bit was never used."

I have sent copies of my pamphlet to all parts, hoping to check the growing evil. A nephew of mine living at Kingston, Jamaica, says, "I have

lent your pamphlet to one of our largest livery stablemen. He at once accepted it, and took off all unnecessary restraints from his horses. The poor animals are often barbarously used here."

Mr. Whittem, proprietor of large collieries in Warwickshire, writes, "In reply to your inquiries, I found neither argument nor remonstrance of any use with our carters, who, when my back was turned, returned to their habits. I found the only remedy was to remove the bearing-rein entirely; this I have done, and the horses now perform their hard work with much greater ease." In another letter he says, "I have long discarded bearing-reins, when a driver has driving-reins; but as our sixty horses are not driven with reins, we have a loose leading-strap fastened on one side of the bit, with the other end looped on one of the hames, for the purpose of leading the horses."

In the Life of John Wesley, the great divine, he relates how he read Homer's "Iliad," "Odyssey," &c., on horseback. He writes, "I was thinking how is it that no horse ever stumbles while I am reading? No account can possibly be given but this: because then I throw the reins on his neck. I set myself to observe, and I aver that in riding a hundred thousand miles I scarce

ever remember any horse (except two, that would fall head over heels any way) to fall, or make a considerable stumble, which I rode with a slack rein. To fancy, therefore, that a tight rein prevents stumbling is a capital blunder. I have repeated the trial more frequently than most men in the kingdom can do. A slack rein will prevent stumbling if anything will."

The following remarks from a work entitled "Horse Shoeing; as it is, and as it should be," put the case clearly:—"With the wrongly perverse idea that a horse needs holding up to his work, his head is tied to his collar by a long strap, termed a bearing-rein, which is so adjusted that, if he makes but one false step he must fall helplessly to the ground. Ignorant, selfish humanity will not perceive that from the horse's head to the tip of his tail is a series of joints, every one of which, when the horse is in motion, requires to have free play, and that it is as necessary for him to have his head, neck, and tail free when moving at any pace, as it is for ourselves to have the use of our arms when walking or running."

I have just met the following remark from a no less authority than the late Lord Palmerston:—"A runaway horse is best kept in by a

light hand and an easy snaffle."—*Life, by Hon. E. Ashley.*

I will conclude by quoting what Sir Arthur Helps (the author of "Friends in Council") has to say about bearing-reins:—"Whenever you observe," he writes, "a horse or horses in a carriage, which horse or horses are suffering from a tight bearing-rein, you may surely conclude that the owner is utterly unobservant of what he ought to observe, or very ignorant of what he ought to know, or pompous, or cruel. He must be very unobservant, or he would see that his horses are suffering from this tight bearing-rein. He must be very ignorant if he does not know that a horse loses much of its power of draught, and cannot recover itself so well when it stumbles, if it have a tight bearing-rein. He must be very cruel if, observing and knowing these things, he does not provide a remedy. He must be very pompous if he prefers that his horses should be made to rear their heads on high, and to rattle their trappings about (which is a sign of their exceeding discomfort), to their being dealt with humanely and reasonably. Well, then, I observe the equipages where the irrational tight bearing-rein is used. I then look at the arms on the carriages;

and I know who are the greatest fools in London in the upper classes. The bewigged brute and idiot of a coachman, of course, thinks it a very fine thing to sit behind these poor animals with their stuck-up heads; but his master ought to know better."

THE END.

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